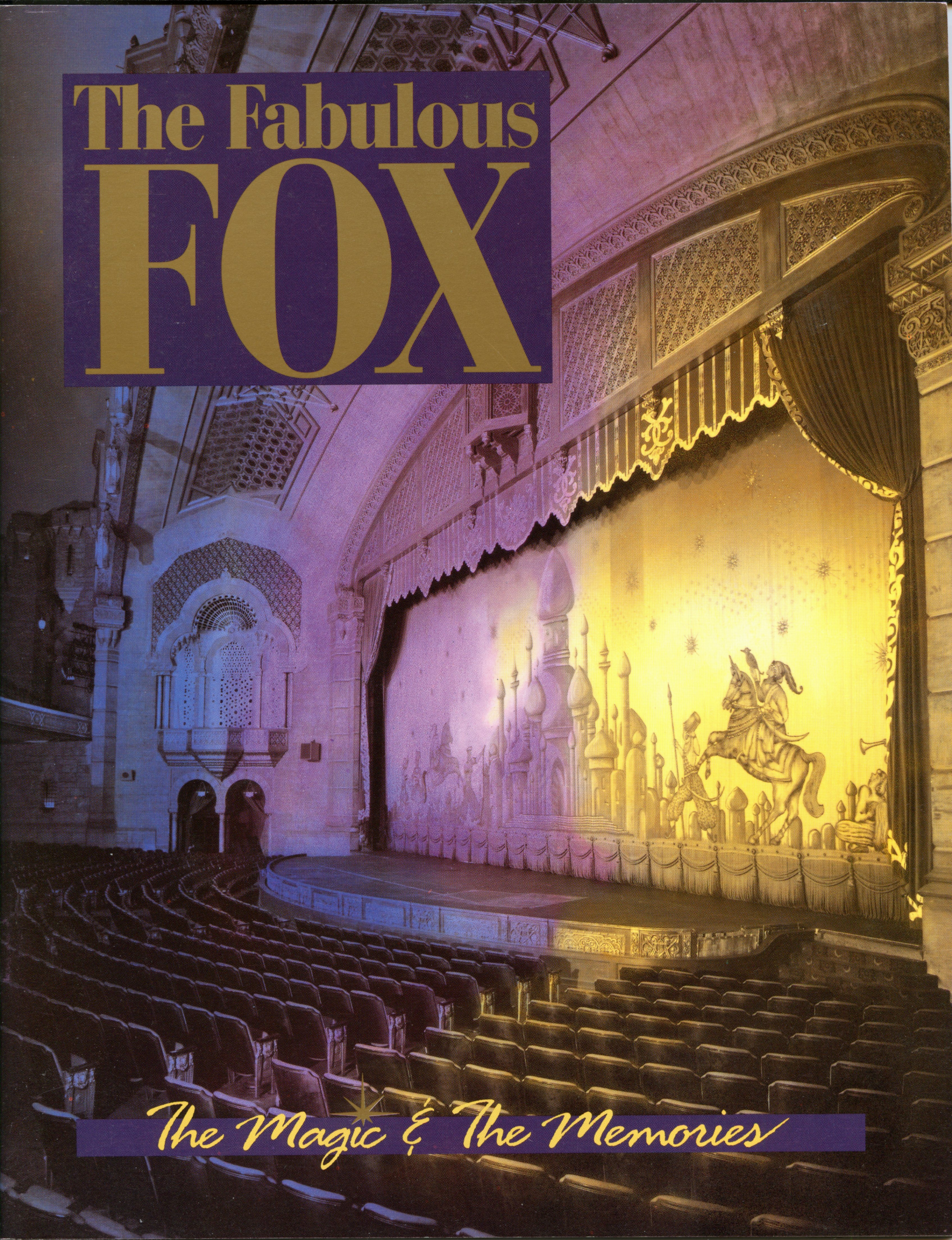
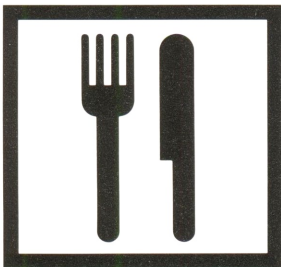


The Fabulous FOX

The image shows the interior of a grand theatre. The stage is set with a large, ornate backdrop depicting a castle with multiple towers and a knight on horseback. The stage is illuminated with warm, golden light. The auditorium is filled with rows of dark, upholstered seats. The architecture is highly detailed, with intricate carvings and a high, vaulted ceiling. A balcony with a decorative railing is visible on the left side of the stage.

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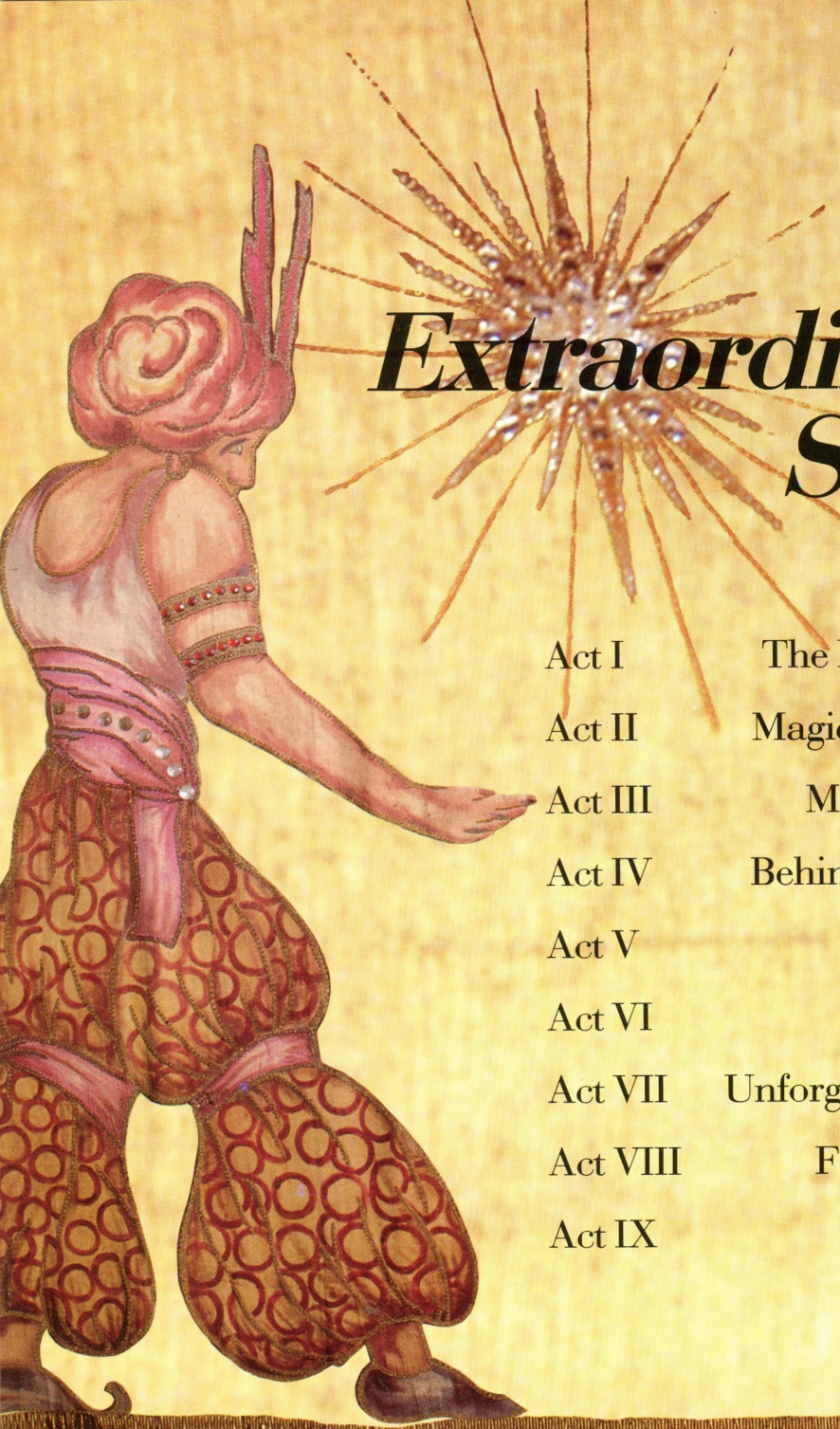
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Act II	Magical Milestones
Act III	Moorish Mirage
Act IV	Behind The Scenes
Act V	Restoration
Act VI	Shining Stars
Act VII	Unforgettable Nights
Act VIII	Fox Reflections
Act IX	Final Act



THE FOX THEATRE

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The Fabulous FOX

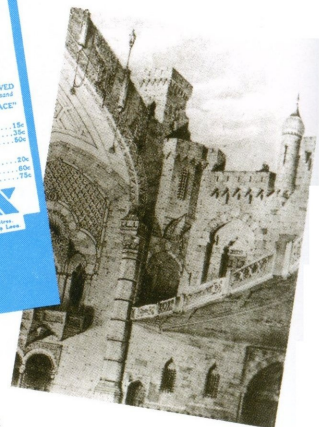
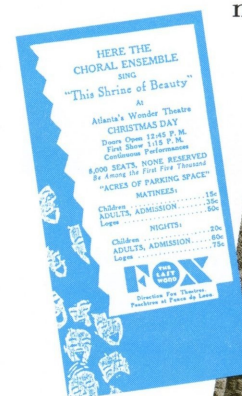
FOX FACTS & FANTASIES

During the movie theatre heydays of the 1940's, approximately 75 Fox ushers lined up for daily inspection: shined shoes, fresh uniforms, neat hair, clean fingernails. Blue uniforms were worn in summer, red in winter; each with white bat-wing standup collars and bow ties. The manager wore a morning suit by day and an evening suit for night performances. An official city censor presided over the film to ensure that profanity and sex scenes were not included.

Atlanta's Fox Theatre, originally the Yaarab Temple Shrine Mosque, was designed in the late 1920's as headquarters for a 5,000-member Shriners organization. It was a beautifully outlandish, opulent, grandiose monument to the heady excesses of the pre-crash 1920's, a mosque-like structure complete with minarets, onion domes, and an interior decor which was even more lavish than its facade.

Entering the huge auditorium, an early reviewer for the *Atlanta Journal* described "a picturesque and almost disturbing grandeur beyond imagination." Visitors encountered an indoor Arabian courtyard with a sky full of flickering stars and magically drifting clouds; a spectacular striped canopy overhanging the balconies; stage curtains depicting mosques and Moorish rulers in hand-sewn sequins and rhinestones. The interior was a masterpiece of trompe l'oeil: false beams, false balconies, false tents, ornate grillwork hiding air conditioning and heating ducts. Virtually every practical feature was disguised with artistic fantasy.

Detailing and furnishing were equally ornate. Nothing — no space, no furniture, no hardware—



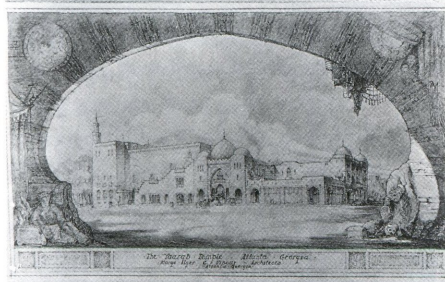
escaped the gilt, the tile, the geometric design. Mens' and ladies' lounges, broom closets, telephone booths were all emblazoned with intricate plaster, bronze and painted detail.

Yet for all this seeming excess, The Fox retained a subtlety of style and a sense of tastefulness. As rich as it was in ornamentation, it never appeared overstated.



Its history has been as dramatic as its decor. Surviving the economy has always been a way of life for the building. Cost overruns threatened the Yaarab Temple mosque from the outset. To generate additional funding, the Shriners worked out a deal with movie mogul William Fox, who at that time was building movie "palaces" in Detroit, St. Louis, Brooklyn and San Francisco. He made this his Southeastern jewel with minor alterations in the original blueprints.

The Fox opened as the Great Depression began. After 125 weeks of talking pictures and elaborate



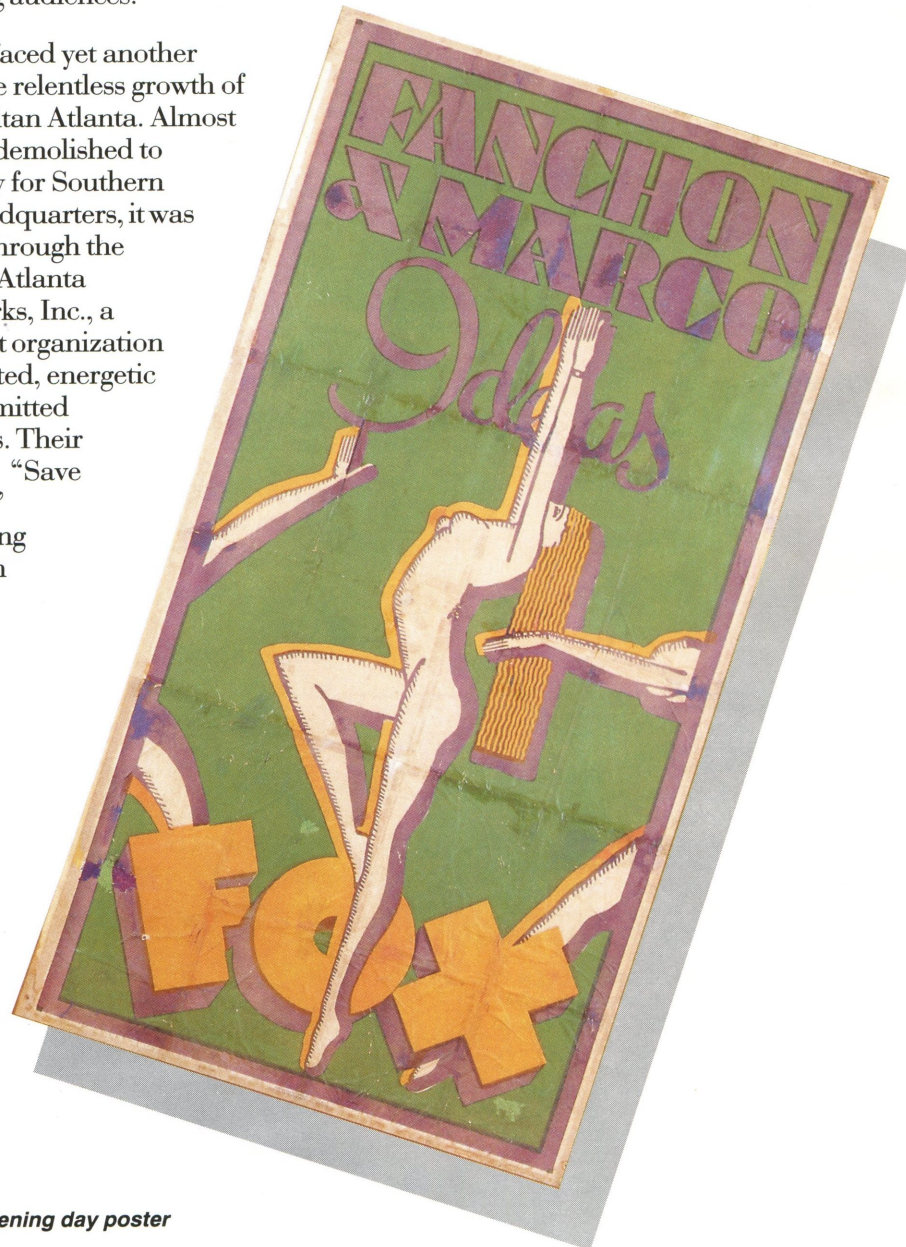
Original architects' drawing

stage entertainment, it declared bankruptcy. Revived after temporary city ownership, it scraped by during the 1930's. Under strong management The Fox prospered as one of Atlanta's finest movie houses from the 1940's through the 1960's. Occasional live entertainment by name artists and the Metropolitan Opera Company's 20-year annual spring performances brought The Fox some of its greatest moments of glory.

The time of the movie palace finally ran out around 1973. Television, suburban flight and a changing movie industry took patrons elsewhere. Film distributors

required months-long commitments for first-run films. While this was easy for suburban theaters holding only 500 seats or so, it presented a problem for the massive Fox. With almost 4,000 seats, it could complete a run in less than a week. The Fox was reduced to showing second-run movies to dwindling audiences.

The Fox faced yet another threat: the relentless growth of metropolitan Atlanta. Almost sold and demolished to make way for Southern Bell's headquarters, it was rescued through the efforts of Atlanta Landmarks, Inc., a non-profit organization of interested, energetic and committed Atlantans. Their four-year "Save The Fox" fundraising campaign



Original opening day poster



Trying First Performance Goes Off Flawlessly at Mosque Theater

Gala Fox Opening Thrills Atlanta With Great Show

By Ernest Rogers

This reporter has attended the openings of five of Atlanta's major theaters but the experience Wednesday at the Fox was the most breath-taking in nine long years of reporting and dramatic observation. The whole may best be summed up in the comment that it was an event—an event such as no perfrid theater-goer would be content to miss.

The great structure seating 4,504 persons, was filled at the first show, which began at 1:15 o'clock, and before the performance had ended there were thousands more standing at various points of vantage and in the long queue extending from the box office on Peachtree, south to Ponce de Leon Avenue, and then west to West Peachtree Street.

Seated in the Loge of the magnificent theater we could not restrain the consciousness that there was a great tribute being paid by the people of Atlanta to a great organization which had brought to us such entertainment as we have dreamed of often but seen and heard only too seldom. We felt that Rocky Newton was right in advertising it as "the last word." With only minor deflections the opening performance—a trying one for the artists—went off without a flaw and an Atlanta audience sat and cheered as we rarely have observed them in giving vent to their feelings.

Eyes Bulge A Beauty

Arriving in the theater shortly before time for the opening we had the pleasure of noticing the reactions of those who entered the shrine of beauty for the first time. Necks were craned as eyes bulged at the splendor before them and then, after the first wave of amazement, there came that look of contentment indicative that the Fox had sold itself to Atlanta.

The performance, per se, was excellent. Iris Wilkins, the diminutive organist from the Pacific coast, started things going with an informal organ fugue and immediately put the audience in high good humor. Then came a screen trailer from Harold B. Franklin, president of Fox West Coast

Theaters, dedicating the theater to Atlanta and the southeast and outlining the policies of the house. After this came "Steamboat Willie", a sound cartoon, which wrangled gales of laughter from the customers.

Now for a thrill.

The house was darkened—pipe organ improvisations were heard—then a flash of light and Enrico Leide and his assembled musicians and singers burst into "This Shrine of Beauty", a special vocal and instrumental arrangement of Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" overture for which the lyrics were submitted by your humble servant.

Audience Actually Sings

Following Mr. Leide's triumphal return to the theatrical life of the city there was shown another newsreel and then Don Wilkins, Iris's husband and master of ceremonies, cajoled the audience to singing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "Singing in the Rain." And believe it or not, the audience sang like they enjoyed it.

"Beach Nights", the gorgeous Fanchon and Marco Idea, then followed and brought forcefully to mind just how much we have been missing to good flesh and blood entertainment all these mechanical months. The "Idea" was full of class and great gobs of entertainment were tossed to the audience. A jazz band doubling from the pit, performed perfectly under the leadership of Mr. Wilkins and contributed no little to the enjoyment.

Concluding the performance was the Fox Film, "Salute" a story of the Army and Navy Academies, with George O'Brien, Helen Chandler and William Janney in the leading roles. That droll-colored man, Stepin Fetchit, also kicked in with several high-key observations which caught the popular fancy.

It was a great show; a great occasion; a great event.

The Fox Theater now takes its stand in the local theatrical field—and what ample feet it has to stand on!

opened the hearts and purse strings of individual and corporate donors. Under Atlanta Landmarks' ownership, The Fox was once again put on a sound financial footing as a multi-purpose performing arts center. In 1976, documents were submitted qualifying The Fox to be designated a National Historic Landmark.

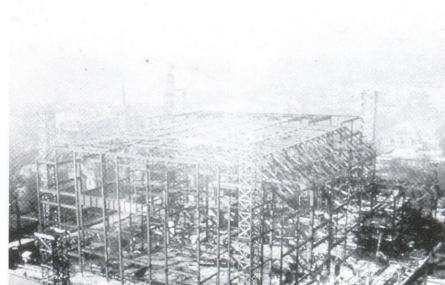
The moment Atlanta Landmarks took control of The Fox, a restoration program began. An army of volunteers went to work cleaning the interiors for the first benefit concert. Volunteer labor has been a significant ingredient in the restoration. As time passed, the work required skilled artisans to make the auditorium and exotic ballrooms attractive enough to draw the large audience and quality shows necessary for success.



Building on opening day, completed



Retail space during construction



Basic steel structure

In 1987, a second fundraising campaign was launched to "Fix The Fox." It successfully raised \$4.2 million to improve safety code compliance, provide access for the handicapped, better equip the building to operate efficiently and preserve it structurally.

To date, more than \$6 million has been spent in the restoration effort, raised through benefits, Atlanta Landmarks membership dues, ticket surcharges, and generous corporate and private donations.

Opening day review,
Atlanta Journal
Dec. 26, 1929

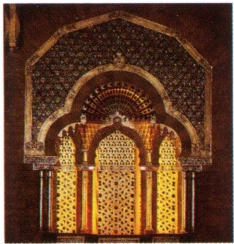
FOX FACTS & FANTASIES

The Fox produces more than \$10 million a year in box office sales. Of this, more than 90 percent goes to promoters and entertainers. The Fox derives its income from theatre rental and concession stand sales. A 50-cent ticket surcharge goes toward continuing renovation.

It costs more than \$2 million a year to operate The Fox. It takes more than \$16,000 worth of electricity a month to keep it operational.

To build another theatre of its size would cost an estimated \$40 million. To completely replace The Fox as it is today could run over \$100 million.

The Fox has generated an operating surplus every year since Landmarks took over in 1975. It may be the only independent, non-profit civic auditorium in the country which can sustain its own operations financially.



Trefoil arch hides organ pipes

At present, some 275 nights a year are booked. The Egyptian Ballroom and Grand Salon are rented regularly for conventions and other functions. A tribute to The Fox's movie-palace heritage is the Summer Film Festival, a popular weekly showing of classic and contemporary films, complete with concerts on the mighty Möller organ. Since 1975, the theatre has been rented to promoters for an incredible variety of first-rate live performances; rock and classical

concerts, Broadway musicals and big name entertainment. It has proven Landmarks' major contention: Atlanta needed such entertainment space.

In fact, The Fox has generated millions of dollars for the Atlanta economy. An impressive range of events continues to attract nearly three-quarters of a million visitors a year, from Atlanta area residents to tourists to international dignitaries.

The Fox stands today as a fiercely protected landmark and a nationally acclaimed theater; having survived depression, mortgage foreclosure, bankruptcy, competition, television, real estate development, and above all, age.



**SAVE THE FOX.
IT'S NOW OR NEVER.**

For many years, our sparkling performances have kept the Fabulous Fox Shining!



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Magical Milestones

1849

Site of the present Fox Theatre is Richard Peters' 405-acre farm. It stretches from North Avenue to Eighth Street, Argonne to Bedford Place and beyond Plum Street. Peters, a civil engineer, established the first streetcar line in Atlanta.

1863

Confederate fortifications are built on the site to defend Peachtree Road and the city.



1878

Property owner becomes Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, entrepreneur and city planner; who also built the Kimball House in 1870, the Southeast's largest and finest hotel at the time, at the corner of Pryor and Whitehall Streets.

1880's

Site at Peachtree and Kimball Street is the showplace Victorian mansion and gardens of Willis E. Ragan, Albany native and dry-goods wholesaler.

1889-1890

Thirty-two Knights Templar and Scottish Rite Masons meet in December and organize a Yaarab Temple Shrine in Atlanta. The charter was granted at the Fifteenth Annual Imperial Council meeting of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in Chicago in June 1890.

1916

Shriners announce "the project of building a Shrine Mosque as Yaarab Temple's contribution to the civic growth of the Gate City of the South."

1918

A class of 851 Shrine initiates makes a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca.

1922

King Tutankhamen's tomb is discovered in Egypt, inspiring a flamboyant Egyptian decorative revival which influences the design of the Yaarab Temple mosque.

Yaarab Temple purchases a desirable piece of property on the corner of Peachtree Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue (formerly Kimball Street).

The site is acquired in a trade for the Shriner's original lots at Ivy and Baker streets and cash payments. Total cost: \$169,000.

1925

Yaarab Temple discusses plans for a magnificent Shrine Mosque and civic auditorium boasted to "out-Baghdad Baghdad." A building fund is launched.

The Yaarab Temple Building Corporation holds a limited design competition, with six of Atlanta's top architectural firms entering. A jury of three, two of whom are architects, choose Marye, Alger and Vinour, designers of Atlanta's Terminal Station.

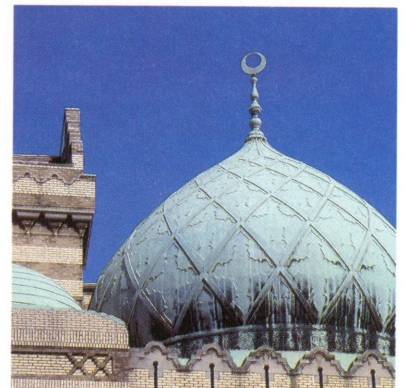
1927-1928

Temple trustees negotiate with Fox Theatrical Corporation for a \$3 million, 21-year lease to insure completion of the building and to allow for continuing revenue.

It becomes evident that the building will cost more than \$2 million, requiring a bond issue of \$1,500,000 to cover cost overruns. While union scale is 85 cents an hour, out-of-work tradesmen gladly accept 50 cents an hour for painting jobs. Gallons of buttermilk and sweet milk are brought each morning from the 10th Street Dairy to mix casein paint.

1929

Fox Theatre opens on Christmas Day, just months after the great stock market crash. Admission is 15 to 75 cents. On December 27, Yaarab Temple conducts its first business session in the lounge of the new Shrine Mosque and conducts its first initiation on New Year's Eve.



1930

Loew's Theatre Corporation sets up joint management with Fox officials to stabilize finances.

1932

Fox Theatre Corporation goes bankrupt, wiping out the Yaarab Temple Building Corporation's investment in the mosque. The Corporation loses its principal investment and becomes a tenant-at-will of the bondholders.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, then New York governor, delivers commencement address for Oglethorpe University in May at The Fox. Loew's management arrangement ends. Fox closes in June.

Fox reopens in August and changes managers twice. In December, the mortgage is foreclosed and the theatre auctioned for \$75,000 to the Theatre Holding Company owned by officers of the Yaarab Temple.

Theatre Holding Company collapses and control of Fox goes to the City of Atlanta for nonpayment of taxes.

1933

Theatre entrepreneur Robert B. Wilby takes lease on Fox, but is financially unsuccessful.

1935

Mosque, Inc. is formed by an Atlanta business group headed by Arthur Lucas and William Jenkins. They team with Paramount Pictures to run The Fox as a movie house.

1939

The premiere of the MGM movie, *Gone With the Wind*, is held at the Loew's Grand at the south end of Peachtree Street. (Since the Loew's demise in 1976, The Fox has become mythically associated with the movie. A piece of The Loews' still lives on in The Fox. The Loew's 35mm projection equipment and some of its seats have been installed in The Fox.)



1940



According to Edith Hills Coogler in the *Atlanta Journal Magazine*, March 3, 1940: "Two years ago, nobody dreamed that a sleepy-head town like Atlanta would support such entertainment. Folks in this part of the country ate a light supper, kissed the family good night, and went to bed by 9 o'clock."

Atlanta becomes a major music, arts and entertainment center, with opera, symphonies and concerts. Nationally-known orchestras, led by such greats as Tommy Dorsey, Kay Kyser, Buddy Rogers, Ozzie Nelson, Eddie Duchin and Artie Shaw are playing at the theatres along Peachtree, including The Fox, Roxy, Paramount, and Loew's. (Of these greats, only The Fox stands today.)

**IN 1974... WE LED THE EFFORT TO
"SAVE THE FOX!"**

**THANKS TO YOU THE FOX IS MORE
"FABULOUS" THAN EVER.**

atlanta's
26rock
Pure Rock 'n' Roll

1946

World Premiere of the Disney movie, *Song of the South*, is held at The Fox on November 12th. A co-creation of Walt Disney and Atlanta author Joel Chandler Harris, it features Harris' famous Uncle Remus stories and characters. Atlanta's Junior League members wrote Walt Disney in 1944 to suggest creating the film. The Junior League and the women of the Uncle Remus Memorial Association co-sponsor the event.

1947-1968

Fox contracts with New York's Metropolitan Opera for spring performances: "one glorious week a year."

1951

Robert Wilby regains management of theatre in partnership with Herbert Kinsey. The Fox prospers under Noble Arnold as general manager until his retirement in the late 1960's.

1954

The Möller organ plays its last strains after more than twenty-five years of neglect.

1963

American Theatre Organ Society and Joe Patten, present Fox Technical Director, restore the Möller organ with a rebuilt generator, new leather and seven miles of electrical wiring.

1974

Fox is threatened with demolition to make way for a new Southern Bell headquarters. Word quickly spreads to save the "financial white elephant."

Atlanta Landmarks, Inc. is formed as a non-profit corporation to "Save The Fox." The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Southern Bell and Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson put an eight-month moratorium on the sale of the building to allow Fox supporters to develop financial feasibility study necessary for fund raising.

1975

Fox closes in January after a series of movies fails to draw adequate crowds. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* proclaims its demise. Instead, it reopens in October as a live-show theater with Alex Cooley's presentation of Linda Rondstadt.

A complex land swap enables Atlanta Landmarks to buy The Fox with a \$1.8 million loan — payable in just three years.

Support pours in from across the country to save The Fox. A *Washington Post* editorial calls it "a national landmark, part of America's soul." Arthur Fiedler conducts the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in benefit performances. Jack Benny, Liberace, Kate Smith, Helen Hayes, Mitzi Gaynor, Cloris Leachman, pianist Van Cliburn and others lend support and/or make benefit appearances.

Atlanta business leaders join the Landmarks Board and contribute their expertise.

2-A THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, Friday, Jan. 3, 1975
END OF AN ERA

The Fox Theater Is Dead!



Colford Ralls II typ

1976

U.S. Department of the Interior designates Fox Theatre a National Historic Landmark.

The Lynyrd Skynyrd rock group records its album, "One More from the Road" live from The Fox and donates \$5,000 to the "Save The Fox" campaign. A plaque in The Fox arcade lists major donors.

An anonymous donor pledges a \$400,000 challenge grant. Other major donations come from The National Endowment for the Arts, city and state administered federal funds, major corporations and private foundations, more anonymous donations, and from thousands of citizens.

1978

Atlanta Landmarks pays off \$1.8 million mortgage, six months ahead of schedule. The Fox is officially "saved," although ongoing fundraising, maintenance and restoration are required to help the non-profit theatre live up to its legend.

Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler and The Atlanta Symphony orchestra perform at a restoration fund-raiser.

1979

The Broadway hit, *A Chorus Line*, breaks national records by grossing almost \$1 million during its three-week run at The Fox.

The Fox celebrates its 50th anniversary with a month of special programs, including a benefit concert by Metropolitan Opera soprano Beverly Sills, concerts by clarinetist Benny Goodman and country star Waylon Jennings. The Atlanta Ballet, also celebrating its 50th anniversary, gives its annual performance of *The Nutcracker* at the Fox.

1981

The Rolling Stones play to a standing-room-only audience on the day that present General Manager Ed Neiss assumes duties. A veteran of restoration and operations at the Madison, Wisconsin Civic Center, Neiss begins a campaign to attract even more top entertainment.



1982

Yul Brynner appears in a 4-week run of *The King and I*. *Performance* magazine notes it as the highest-grossing road show in the U.S. for the year. The Fox is officially established as Atlanta's premiere Broadway venue.

1984

Fox hosts League of Women Voters' National Democratic Party Presidential Primary Debate.

1985

Fox installs state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems and welcomes the "Whiteco Superstar Subscription Series" with such performers as Tony Bennett, Eddy Arnold, Liza Minnelli, Perry Como, Rosemary Clooney, David Brenner, The Oak Ridge Boys and The Lennon Sisters.

1986

Fox enters into arrangement with Georgia Public Television to co-present cultural attractions.

Atlanta's Fox competes with New York's Radio City Music Hall and The Fox Theatre in St. Louis for the title of best large venue for U.S. touring shows.

1987

A second fundraising campaign to "Fix The Fox" raises \$4.2 million.

The Theater of the Stars, a 35-year Atlanta institution, begins a long-term association through an annual series of Broadway plays and musicals at The Fox.

1988

Fox is named number one grossing theatre in the 3,000 to 5,000 seat category, according to *Performance Magazine*. It has the most events, the greatest box office receipts, and the highest attendance in the U.S.

1989

The February engagement of Broadway's *Les Miserables* breaks all U.S. box office records in its three-week run at The Fox, according to the League of American Theatres and Producers in New York.

The 50th Anniversary gala of *Gone With The Wind* is held at The Fox. The Fox facade is transformed into a reproduction of Tara, Scarlett O'Hara's plantation. Klieg lights shine on a giant reproduction of the original movie poster above the building. Original stars including Butterfly McQueen arrive in vintage automobiles. Patrons come dressed as their favorite character from the movie.

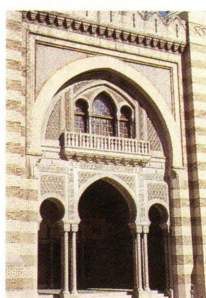
1990

Fox launches the "Coca-Cola International Series" of multi-cultural, multi-national attractions through a ten-year sponsorship from Coca-Cola.



Moorish Mirage

On Peachtree



Ponce de Leon doorway



FOX FACTS & FANTASIES

Until the late 1960's, The Georgian Terrace Hotel was the location of choice for Fox stars. The terrace overlooking The Fox was a favorite "watering hole" for patrons at intermission, who bitterly lamented its demise until the Fox began serving spirited refreshments in the 1970's. The rumors of a secret underground tunnel between the two buildings are not true. They're strictly utility rooms with no outside access. Stars had to walk across the street just like the patrons. The Georgian Terrace is now being refurbished.

Like the movies on its screen, The Fox was one grand illusion. To some, it might have been a mere movie palace, admittedly of a monumental scope. But to true believers, it was a treasure cave, a refuge from reality, a secret hiding place. Under its arabesque arches, mortals became Ali Baba, Dorothy

The Fox's Arabian Nights Design And Tut Fever Details Have Passed The Judgment Of Time

in Oz, Tom and Huck adventuring through the *Arabian Nights*. The gold Möller organ had only to ascend from its vault, the stars wink in their make-believe heaven, and there was no Depression, no war, no woe or personal care.

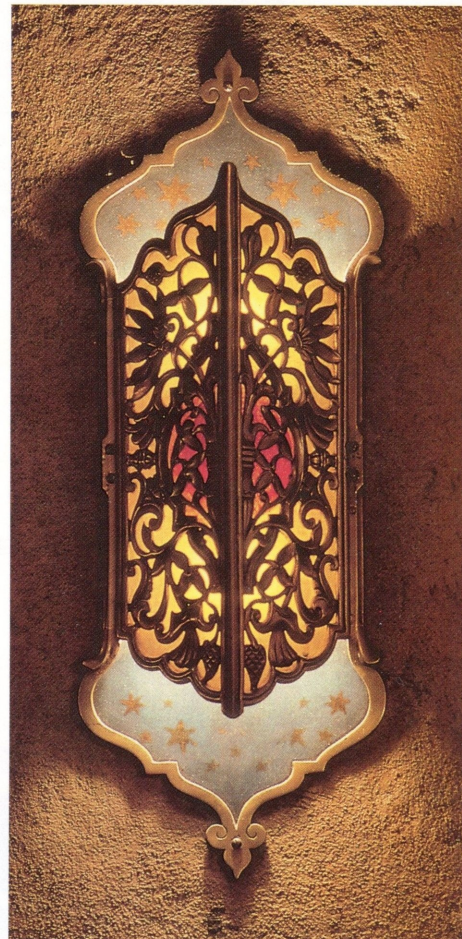
In a sense, the medium genuinely was the message, for only a film of spectacular proportions—a *Giant*, a *Robe*, a *Guns of Navarone*—could rival the arena itself for the audience's attention. Adrift in the dimly lighted auditorium-courtyard, it was all but impossible to resist the magnetic urge of fantasy. What fabled sheiks dwelt behind those fortified turrets, those castellated walls? What lay beyond the clouds drifting lazily across the azure sky? Even a routine visit to the restroom triggered a vicarious time-trip to the Land of the Pharaohs. Ensnared in one of the

mahogany polychrome throne chairs, you were Queen Nefertiti or King Tut himself.

The boy pharaoh, Tutankhamen, wielded a mystical influence over the architecture of The Fox.



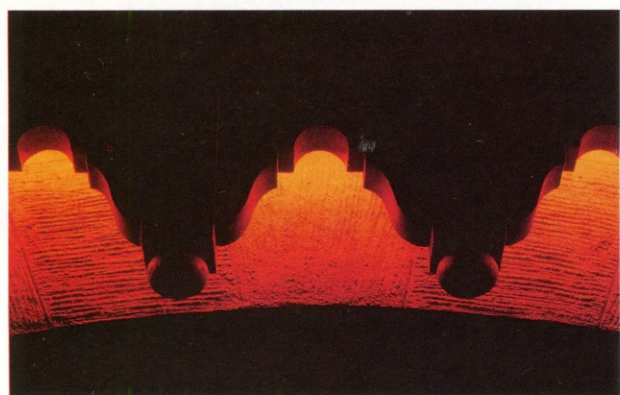
Lighting at The Fox adds to the magic and mystery





Discovery

of Tut's treasure-laden tomb by the English archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922 sent America into a frenzy of "Egyptomania." The craze was still running strong in the late '20s, when the Yaarab Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine — more commonly known as the Shriners — set out to build a lavish temple headquarters on Atlanta's Peachtree Street.



**Colorful design and details enhance
The Fox's atmosphere**

Tut fever was a stroke of good fortune for the Shriners, a Masonic organization whose ritual had been drawn from Egyptian and Arabian cultures long before the pharaoh and his fabulous treasures were heralded on these shores.

The craze for everything Egyptian only enhanced the Shriners' desire for a temple of Oriental grandeur. The task of transforming their dream into brick-and-mortar reality fell to the architectural firm of Marye, Alger and Vinour, which was simply instructed to design a structure that would last forever and be more magnificent than the legendary Baghdad of the caliphs.

Principal designer Oliver J. Vinour was a native Frenchman, schooled in architecture at the esteemed

Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. For his inspiration, he turned to three principal sources: picture books on Egypt, Nubia and the Holy Land, and a stack of 50 picture postcards a friend had brought from a grand tour of the Middle East.

Although Vinour and his associates contended that their design for the Fox was of "pure Mohammedan style," they skillfully worked into the interior and exterior motifs architectural elements of Egypt, Morocco, Nubia, Spain, Arabia, India, Persia, and Turkey.

Because it was originally designed for an Arabic-grounded order, the Fox had a valid architectural premise which an Elizabethan-style theater in Newark, N.J., or an Italian rococo design in downtown Detroit couldn't claim. It was extraordinarily large because it was originally intended to house a Shrine Temple with 5,000 members.

The jewelled curtain delights those who get to see it

Viewed from the outside, the illusion was more that of a cluster of buildings in Old Cairo than a single structure occupying much of a block in Atlanta, Georgia. The exterior teased onlookers with promises of the fantasies that lay within.

Horizontal ribbons of cream and buff brick were broken by arches—four-centered arches, lancet arches, ogee arches, horseshoe arches—that wrapped about the building and blended harmoniously with square and circular geometric brick designs, tile and tabby ornamentation. Minarets, styled after the prayer towers of Islamic mosques, capped one corner of the building and flanked the marquee.

Fire escapes, an integral part of the design, were broken by small balconies leading into various sections of the theatre. On the Ponce de Leon Avenue side, the fire escapes also served as the only access to the black section in the upper reaches of the theatre's stratosphere. In those rigidly segregated days, black patrons not only had to view the screen from afar; they were denied the excitement of most of the theatre's ornamental and technical wonders.

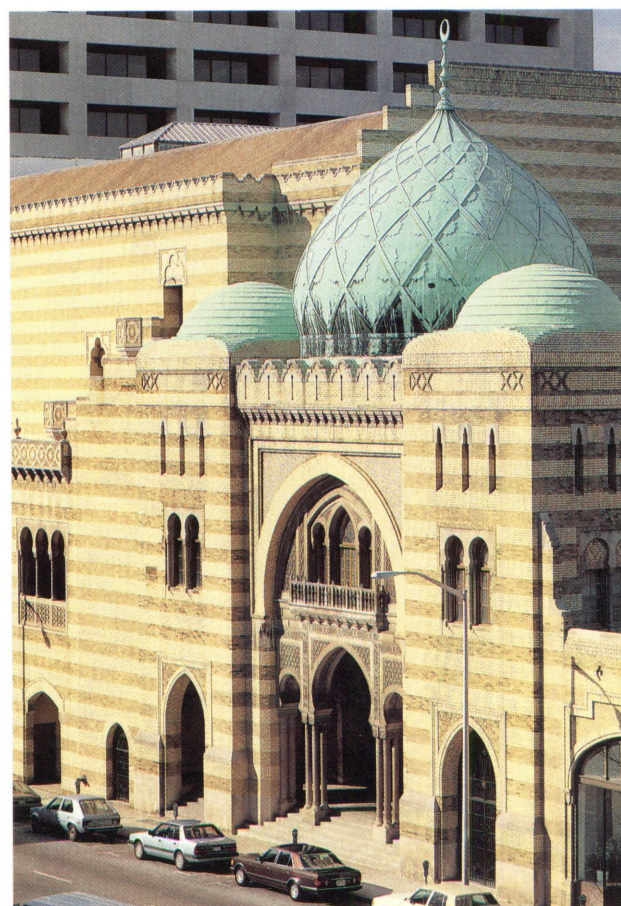
The south facade of the Fox was capped with three domes. The largest, of copper, was ribbed with fanciful handwork and crowned with the Islamic crescent. A set of doors beneath the domes, at street level, was originally intended as the main entrance.

However, when movie mogul William Fox contracted with the Shriners, he decreed that theatre patrons enter through a grand

terrazzo arcade on Peachtree Street. Above it, Fox erected his huge electric marquee, flanked by a pair of minarets. To help the theatre pay its way, the design provided retail space along Peachtree and Ponce de Leon. (Renovation of this facade was made possible through a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.)

The 140-foot arcade, or loggia, was like a magical Arabian carpet, transporting patrons out of the mundane into a land of dreams. Covered to protect patrons from the elements, it was embellished with filigreed lamps and elaborate stenciling and plasterwork.

Shrine entrance from Ponce de Leon





**Solid brass
ticket chopper
was made in
Italy**



Awaiting admittance, moviegoers could window shop and scan posters heralding upcoming films or live productions like the Fanchon and Marco *"Sunkist Beauties."* They applauded patrons who, emerging from the latest Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musical, often tap-danced down the terrazzo to the street. The Fox had that kind of exhilarating effect on Depression- and war-weary Atlantans.

Opening off the arcade was the main entrance to the Shriners Banquet Hall, later known as the Egyptian Ballroom. Once Atlanta's largest dance palace, the ballroom was another quick remedy for the blues.

The theatre's lushly carpeted main lobby titillated the imagination still further with the surprises that lay ahead. Two grand staircases swept up to the loge and dress circles; another led down to the orchestra-level lounges. While waiting for a friend, patrons could rest on velvet-covered benches and watch the goldfish in blue-tiled pools.



Brass escutcheons

Patrons entering the auditorium at orchestra level for the first time expected the usual lavish theatrical decor. Yet the full visual impact registered only after emerging from beneath the balcony overhang. At this point visitors found themselves in a vast Arabian courtyard, over which soared a sky full of drifting clouds and blinking stars.

The courtyard effect is created by an illusionary open sky and by castellated walls with parapets, barred windows and turrets running from the edges of the stage to the upper balconies. The stage area itself spans 125 feet from wall to wall. Above it soars an 80-foot wide proscenium arch lighted by antique-style lanterns, casting a mellow orange glow. The most

beautiful of the original stage curtains depicts mosques and Moorish riders in hand-sewn sequins and rhinestones.

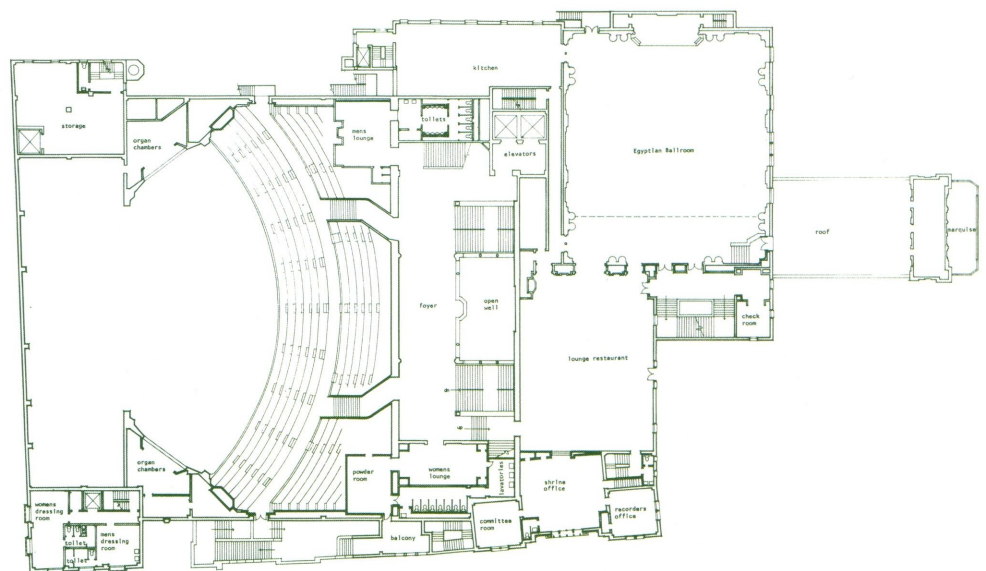
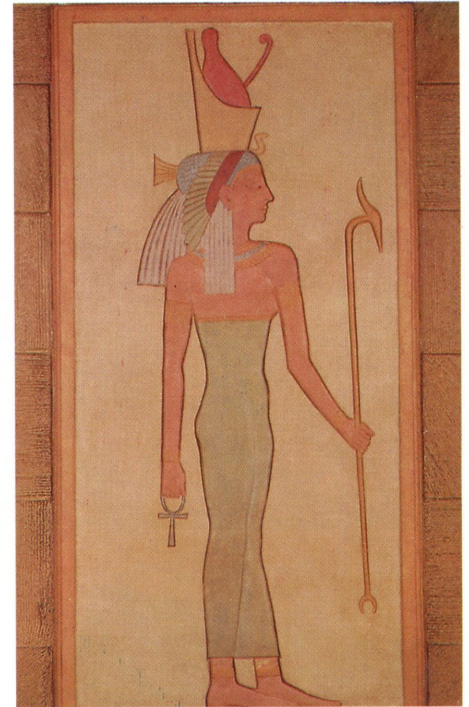
False balconies at either side of the stage frame ornate trefoil grilles, which served to screen pipes of the Möller organ.

This flair for visual illusion was a Fox hallmark. Virtually every practical detail was cunningly disguised. Heating ducts were covered with ornate grillework.



Tutankhamen's throne

Egyptian design in women's upper lounge



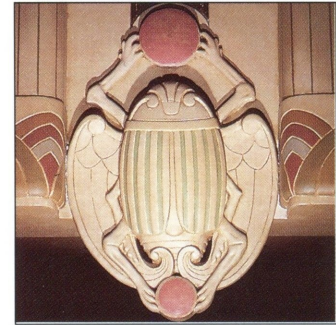


What appear to be wooden beams in many areas of the theatre are plasterwork. By using gelatin molds, plaster and a variety of additives for texture, craftsmen simulated the "beams," granite blocks and gold filigree. This material not only acted as fireproofing, but greatly enhanced the acoustical perfection of the building.

The Gentlemen's Lounge below the main lobby is splashed with scenes of noble Egyptians and their steeds. Floors are bordered with colored tiles, and furnished with tables and chairs accented with winged scarabs, ancient Egyptian symbols of the sun god. A highly stylized falcon, another representation of the sun god, also appears here and elsewhere. Brass escutcheons are fashioned like pharaohs' faces.

Throne-like chairs in the Ladies' Lounge are made of mahogany with polychrome texturing, and bear images of King Tut and his bride. Further accentuating the decor are faces of snarling lions, regal images of the goddess Isis, and the god Horus.

Floor lamps, urns, sofas, chairs and tables have Egyptian or Arabic influences. The ancient Egyptian calendar is painted on the Egyptian Ballroom's ceiling.



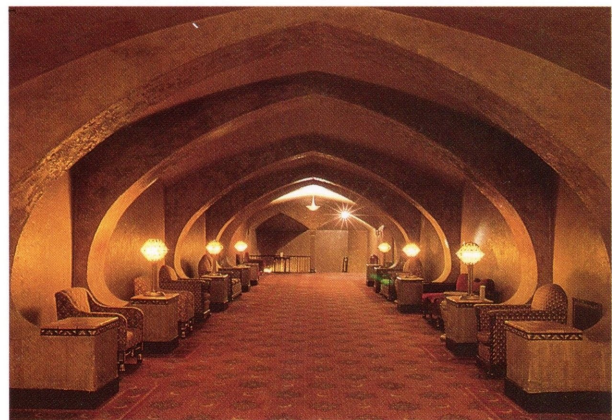
A scarab, the Egyptian symbol of the sun god

Gilt doorways sometimes lead into rooms: other times, they disguise a broom closet, utility room, telephone booth, or blank wall.

During its turbulent lifetime, many of the Fox's prized decorative features were broken, frayed, and discolored with grime. An army of dedicated volunteers and professionals have been toiling for the past years to restore these priceless relics to their original beauty.

FOX

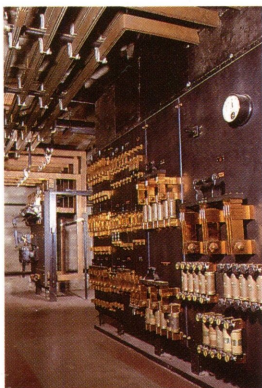
Dress circle promenade



Behind The Scenes

The Fox, like any woman of mystery, coyly disguised her technical secrets. Patrons wondered how the stars could twinkle so believably in the make-believe heavens. They were amazed as the Möller organ and Enrico Leide and the Fox Grand Orchestra ascended from the nether world beneath the

It takes more than \$16,000 worth of electricity a month to operate the complex



stage. In the distant reaches of the upper levels, they marveled at the acoustical perfection. Moviegoers were delighted by the magic of air conditioning during Atlanta's summer heat waves.

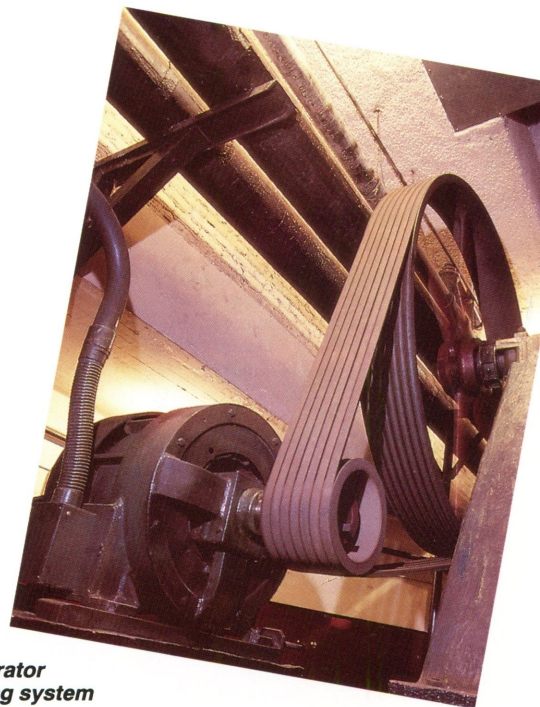
Patrons today are still entertained by the technical secrets and theatrical sleight-of-hand which still operate as well as on opening night in December of 1929. The theater was so far ahead of its time that features considered revolutionary



more than a half century ago are unique today.

Probably no other technical effect has intrigued Fox patrons as much as the courtyard sky, with its stars and lazily drifting clouds. To this day, the audience spends as much time craning up at the "sky" as they do watching the screen and stage.

The sky that beguiled them then and now is in reality a vaulted ceiling, painted an azure blue. The 96 stars are created by tiny 11-watt bulbs fixed above two-inch crystals, radiating a soft twinkling light all over the auditorium. The drifting clouds are projected by a Junior



The original generator powers the cooling system



The “sky” and tent canopy is primarily supported by an innovative truss system using a network of cross beams and steel rods

Brenograph, a vintage “high-tech” device. Its circular disc is set on an electric timer so that the clouds make a revolution in one hour and 45 minutes. A Master Brenograph can project additional slides to produce rain, fog, snow and other weather conditions. Combined with spotlights and special effects, much of the Brenograph technology continues to create magic today.

When the Fox first opened to the public, its bag of lighting tricks also included a phenomenal solar show. The “sun” arose with a faint pinkish-blue glow in the top left rear level, reached a brilliant high noon zenith halfway across the auditorium, and set five minutes

later over the right side of the bridge above the proscenium arch. An overloaded circuit sent the sun into eclipse in the early 1930’s. A team of volunteer electricians from the I.B.E.W. union worked diligently in the 1970’s, and today the old Fox sun shines again.

Beyond the sky, draped above the uppermost levels and projection booths, hangs what appears to be a Bedouin chieftain’s striped tent. No chieftain could have dragged this particular tent around the desert, for it’s actually plaster fortified with steel rods. While it adds to the theatre’s Arabian Nights motif, the canopy also serves as an acoustical funnel, capturing the sounds from the stage and projecting them to the rear of the house.



The canopy is only one of the technical features that made the Fox a model of acoustical engineering. Over the years, architects of well-known concert halls and theaters—including the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.—have visited the Fox for ideas. Construction materials play a vital role in the Fox's acoustical reputation. Instead of heavy draperies which would muffle the sound, the designers made extensive use of plaster. Such surfaces actively reflect the sound from the stage, the Möller organ, the orchestra pit, or the electronic audio system.

Some of the world's greatest artists—rock stars, pianists, dramatic actors, orchestra leaders, organists and operatic singers—have praised the theatre's incomparable acoustical clarity.

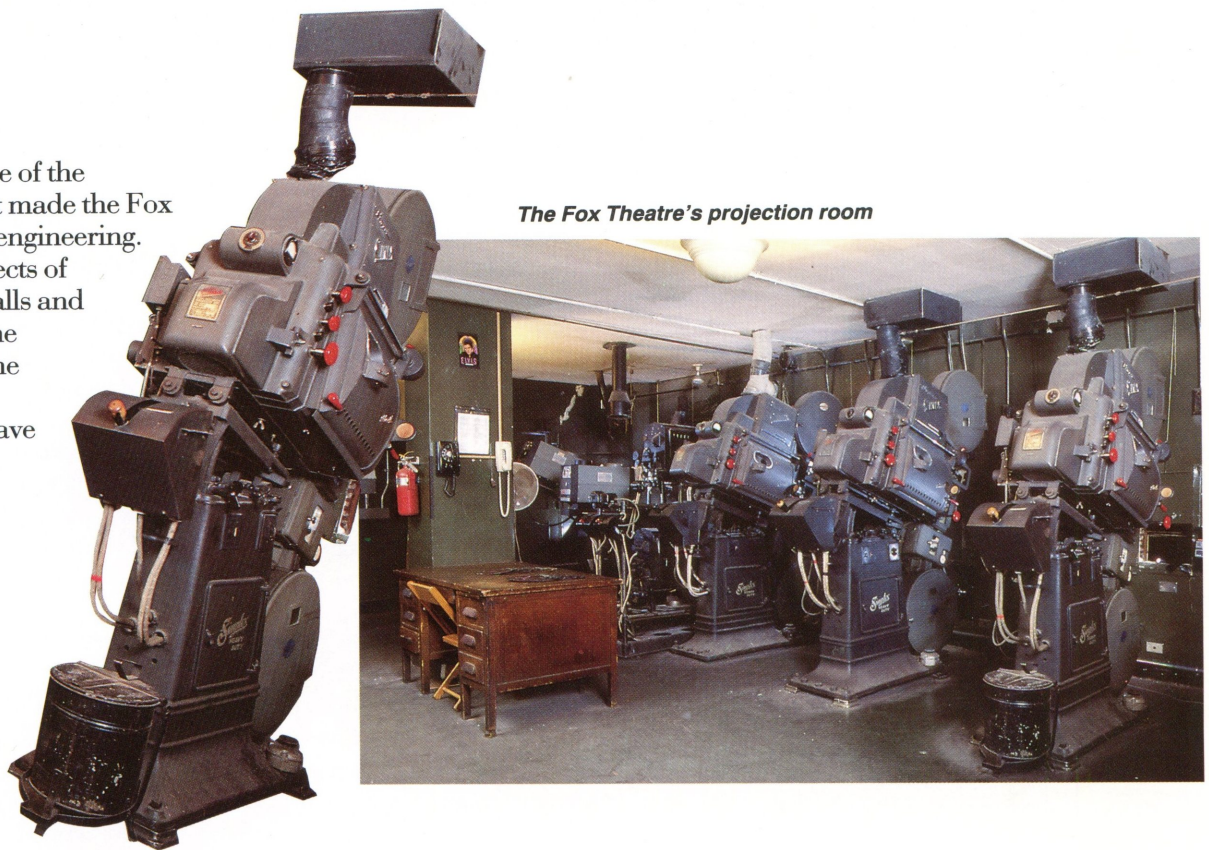
The acoustics, combined with the auditorium's rich ornamental splendor, made the Fox the highlight of the New York Metropolitan Opera's spring tour. As more than one star has commented, you haven't seen *Aida* until you've seen it at the Fox. The vast stage area also dazzled, and sometimes confused, Met singers who'd sung on famous stages all over the world. Accordingly, names of familiar Manhattan streets marked the halls

and tunnels leading from dressing rooms to the stage.

Spanning some 125 feet from wall to wall, the Fox stage remains one of the widest ever built: the proscenium opening, crowned by an ornamental arch, is 80 feet across. In all but the grandest of grand operas, where huge crowds of extras and elaborate scenery and props were required, the sides of the stage had to be masked to prevent the production from becoming lost.

Stage depth is 37 feet. Above it is a 74-foot high metal gridloft from which 64 scenery battens hang. Extensive modernization was carried out in 1979 to accommodate long-running Broadway musicals like *A Chorus Line* and *The Wiz*, and the Atlanta Ballet Company's annual Christmastime presentation of *The Nutcracker*.

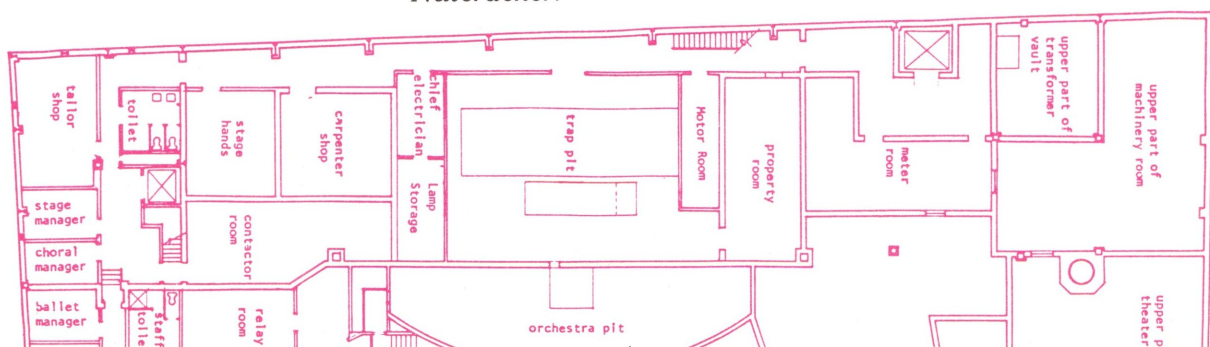
The Fox Theatre's projection room



FOX FACTS & FANTASIES

Many involved in after-hours backstage operations and theatre restoration have heard strange creaks, groans and squeaks that literally raise hair on the back of the neck. Some sound like doors opening and closing, others like sighs and whispers. In the dead of night, if one happens to walk through the Egyptian Ballroom, "ghost footsteps" echo behind those of the living.

Ultimately, most of these sounds have been explained, yet stagehands insist that the backstage elevator is definitely "possessed." No matter what floor is pressed, it often heads straight to seven and stops for no apparent reason; perhaps "the ghost" is a certain mysterious mistress who once had her own private suite. The elevator was the first self-operating pushbutton model introduced in Atlanta in 1929 and still operates, however serendipitously, today.



Instead of the trap doors found in most theaters of its period, the Fox stage height can be adjusted with six motorized elevator lifts. Two of these are large enough (40 feet wide, six feet deep) to transport entire choruses from the lower levels to the stage; a third lowers movie loudspeakers and horns below when not in use.



Two additional elevators raise and lower portions of the orchestra pit. A sixth hoists the Mighty Möller from its vault.

The Fox was one of the first movie houses in the Southeast to install a 35-mm projector and Cinemascope screen for the showing of such 1950's screen spectaculars as *The Robe*, *Auntie Mame*, *Giant*, *Gypsy*, and *Guns of Navarone*. These classic motion pictures, which for a time packed the house and staved off the theatre's years of crisis, were augmented by a 26-loudspeaker stereophonic system. Many of the same motion pictures are featured in the theatre's highly popular Summer Film series along with today's contemporary hits.

Projection equipment was upgraded in the 1970's to deliver presentations of 70 mm and 35 mm Dolby sound films.

Much of the stage and lighting equipment had become outmoded or dysfunctional through misuse and lack of use but everything has been updated or replaced with state-of-the-art technology.

Fox fans' special love is the Möller organ. "Mighty Mo" to the generations of patrons, the organ was created for The Fox by the M.P. Möller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. Through the golden age of Hollywood, it reigned as one of the most colossal theater organs in America. It is equipped with four keyboards and 3,622 pipes, ranging from 32 feet high to several inches.

Seated before it, an organist is a magician who can elicit an entire orchestra from one colorful instrument. "Mo's" 376 stops and 42 ranks can make exotic animal sounds and bird whistles; can simulate an oboe, a flute, a clarinet, gongs, fire whistles, and more than two dozen percussion instruments. In the theatre's heyday as a movie palace, the organ was the cherished prelude to the feature film. Bathed in spotlights, it rose from beneath the stage, booming out a medley of the day's popular songs, mixed with an assortment of light classics; but it had a serious side, as well, and



**Graham Jackson at
the Mighty Mo**



anyone privileged to hear a Bach fugue on the Möller didn't soon forget it. The late Bob Van Camp of WSB-Radio, a favorite house organist, recorded a very successful album entitled *Here With The Wind*, which brought the instrument and artist international acclaim.

The organ was partially repaired during the managerial reign of J. Noble Arnold in the 1950's and again by present Fox Technical Director Joe Patten in 1963. The job required 10 full months, after which Patten established a regular maintenance program. Seven miles of cable were used in the rewiring, new keys were installed, and other parts were made by hand since no replacements were available. In 1965 the gold grand piano was added to the organ to enhance its percussive effects and add piano solo capabilities directly from the organ console. Möller executives inspected the organ in 1974 and

valued it at \$400,000. It was originally purchased for the then-astronomical sum of \$42,000.

Adjacent to the stage, a seven-story dressing room wing can accommodate 130 performers in 17 communal dressing rooms, and two others are reserved for the private use of featured stars. The area is serviced by the original automatic passenger elevator installed in 1929.

Deep beneath the stage, the Fox seems even more massive and mysterious. Huge boilers, fans, pipes and ducts, heat, air condition, ventilate and light the vast complex that sprawls over much of a city block. An emergency generator assures that if all else fails, most systems at the Fox will remain on.

The Fox was a refuge from reality in more ways than one. In 1929, even the most patrician families suffered the humid heat that blanketed

Atlanta in mid-summer. Public buildings, offices, stores, and most other movie houses could offer no greater relief than ceiling fans or "air cooling." Yet, the Fox was equipped with a central air conditioning system capable of turning the Arabian Nights auditorium into the Arctic. An original energy efficient ventilating system pumps stale air from the auditorium through huge ducts into the basement, where it is washed through a bank of fine sprays, then returned, fresh again, to the auditorium. Today's models are far less energy-efficient.

Today, Fox fanatics can discover first-hand the magic and the mystery of the entire theatre in specially-arranged *Top To Bottom Tours* led by experts who know — and reveal — her secrets.

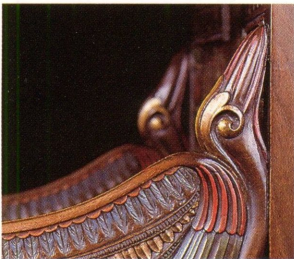


Restoration ...

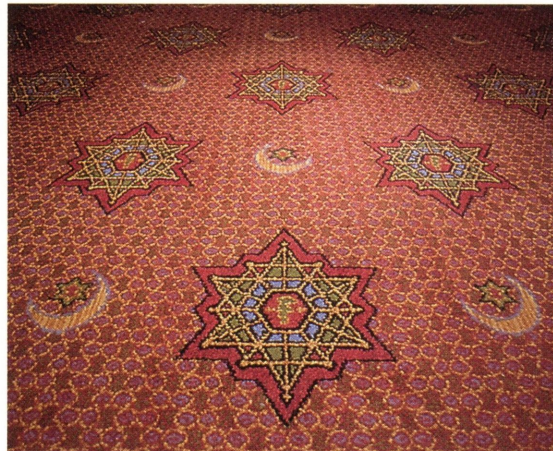
Recapturing The Glory

A small staff of skilled artisans employed by Atlanta Landmarks has worked continually since 1976 to restore The Fox. Several architectural firms have participated in specific projects involving new construction or structural work. Electricians have spent years upgrading the vast electrical system, with occasional help from union volunteers and contractors on bigger projects.

Extensive inventories and original blueprints have been uncovered over the years to assist in the monumental restoration. A fair amount of new design has been required to replace fixtures or furnishings that were either lost, never installed though intended, or never intended but required by modern functional demands. Yet the new design has been based on fragmentary information from remnants, old photographs, or verbal descriptions. In some cases, the prevalent design vocabulary was used to create furnishings or spaces in complete harmony with the original architecture.

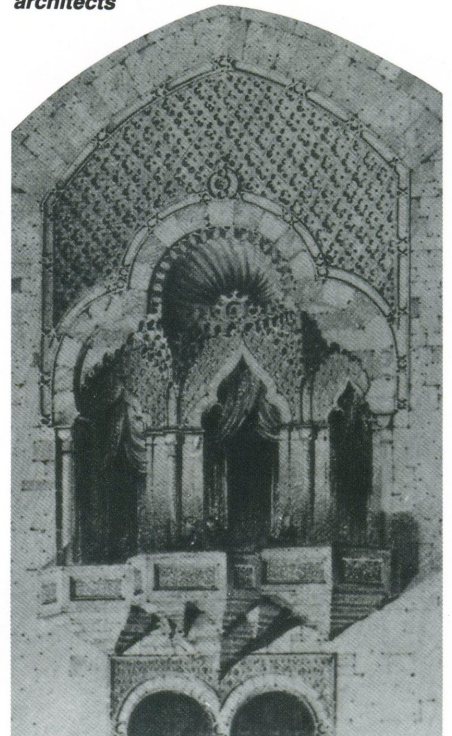


Tut's throne



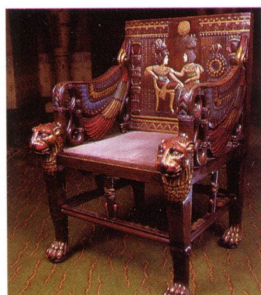
Under the supervision of Technical Director Joe Patten and Restoration Director Rick Flinn, major work has been carried out alongside a very active program in the theatre and ballrooms, utilizing what might be termed "guerilla tactics" of restoration and construction. Work has begun early in the morning and late at night, when rooms are not in use, then hastily cleaned in time for the next event.

*The trefoil arch
as drawn by
the original
architects*



Highlights of Restoration

The Spanish Room was rebuilt and restored to become an extension of the lobby and concession area with new handicapped-access lounges and expanded bar service. The dramatic design, with Moorish beams, tile, sweeping stairs and ornamental railings, reflects the original decor and architectural concepts expressed elsewhere in the theatre.



"The most beautiful thing that has been found in Egypt ..."
Howard Carter, Valley of the Kings, Egypt, 1922

The Egyptian Ballroom kept three staff painters busy for months. Painters worked at the top of a fully extended scaffold to clean away more than 60 years of smoke, dust and grime. Hundreds of stencilled patterns needed for the ceiling designs were cut and colors matched to the original. One section at a time, the hieroglyphics and other painted ornaments have been restored and glazed, as vivid as they were on December 25th, 1929.

New carpet replaced the generic theatre pattern with original Fox motifs.

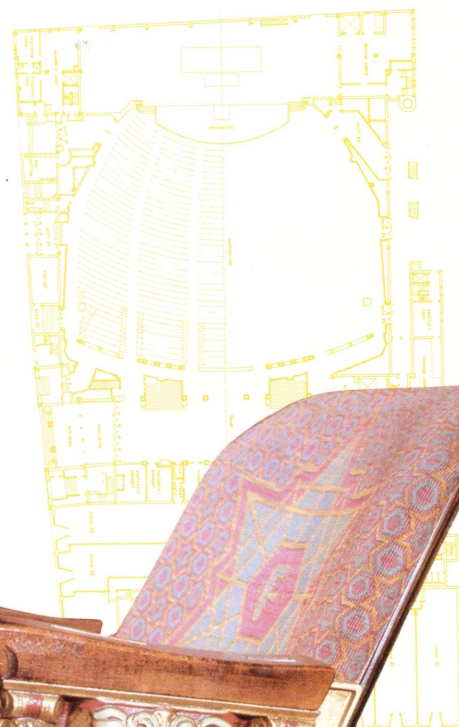
Exterior parapet walls were patched, waterproofed and recapped with new coping. Windows and doors have been

scraped, repaired and repainted in original colors. Layers of paint were removed to reveal original stencil paintings throughout the theatre. New stencils were cut and colors matched, so walls, ceilings and doors could come alive with their original designs. The yards of bright metallic leaf (aluminum leaf with glazes creating the look of antique gold) have been restored.

Plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems have undergone extensive renovations and are constantly being upgraded and maintained.

After nearly a year of experimentation, ceramic artists devised a formula for reproducing the glazes on the 6' x 6' beige restroom tiles, right down to the tiny cracks, or "crazing," characteristic of old glazed ceramics. It took five years to rediscover the almost-lost "de cuerda seca" or dry-line technique for creating the elaborate pattern tiles that decorate the theatre's lounges and lobbies. More than half a century of mellowing have been simulated by the formula. Experts can hardly tell the new tiles from the originals.

Piece by piece, all eight of the theatre's original throne chairs have been rebuilt, re-upholstered and reinstalled



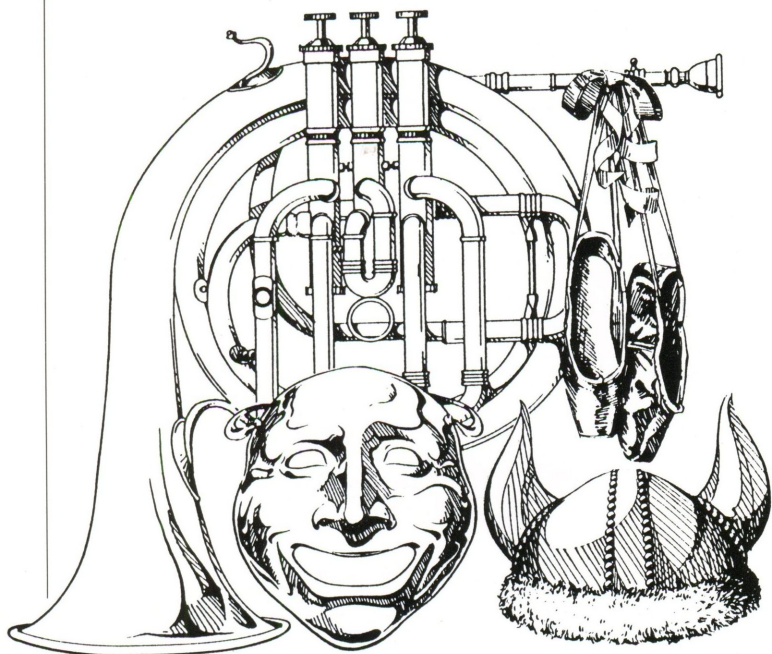


The
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The Fabulous
FOX
Theatre



The Egyptian Ballroom is stunningly restored



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in the lobbies. Atlanta Area Tech faculty and students contributed to this project as well as to stenciling and drapery re-creation. The carved walnut chairs, some of the Fox's most awe-inspiring decor, were made by a Chicago firm operating from 1888 to 1939. The reproduction of the elegantly embroidered mohair upholstery on the throne chairs and lobby sofas took more than six years.

Auditorium and Stage

The "main traveler" curtain, specially woven in South Carolina, was shipped to San Francisco to be silk screened with an ornate and decorative design replicating the original of 1929. Returned to Atlanta, the fabric weighed 1,000 pounds. Each of the 38 panels, measuring 4' x 38', was cut twice, pinned together by hand and sewn using a dolly rolled along the fabric. This process took two entire weeks of 10-hour days. A new track allows the curtain to be drawn or raised with special lead counterweights. The pattern for the new lambrequin was designed by tracing the old one on paper. Decorative gold trimming was sewn by hand and surrounded by hundreds of yards of gold braid. Hanging the 90-foot lambrequin high above the stage was an

engineering feat in itself requiring four days.

New seats have been constructed of cast iron to match the original seats that were removed in 1966. A design layout for the upholstery fabric had already been developed,



The Egyptian Ballroom kept three staff painters busy for many months



Men's mezzanine lounge

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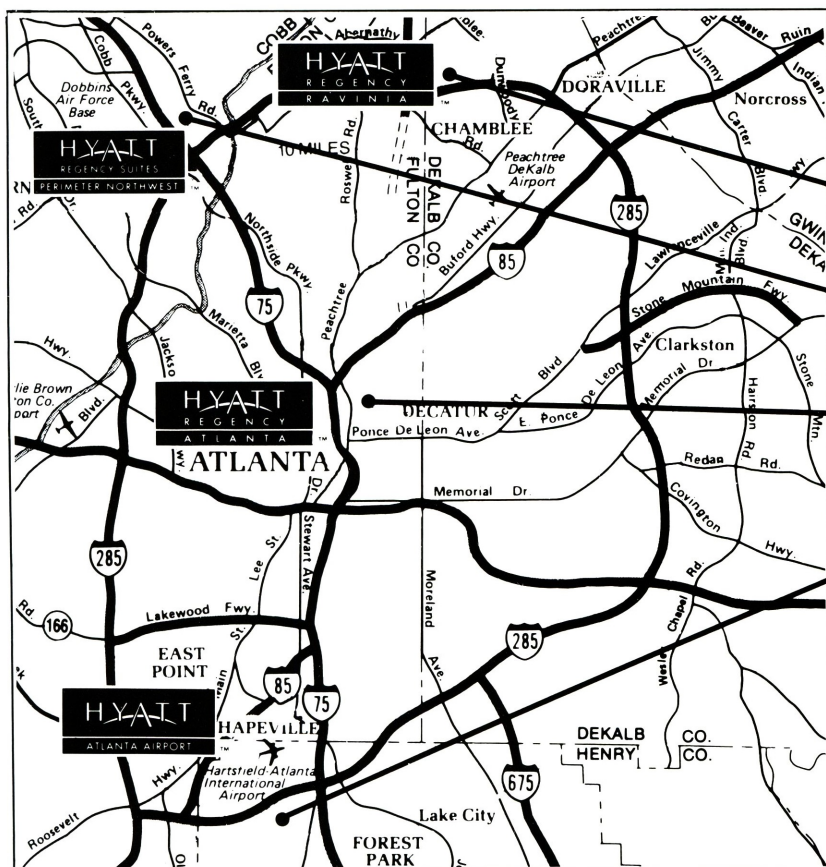
based on old photographs and imagination, but there had been no way of determining the exact scale, coloration or type of weave. When a fragment of the original fabric was discovered under later upholstery on a balcony seat, it became possible to recreate faithfully the field of small

hexagons and stars and a large eight pointed star with the "F" logo. The colors - blue, green, yellow and black on a deep red background - are similar to the carpet. The theatre now has 4,518 seats.

Herculean efforts by scores of Fox staff, volunteers, tradesmen, artists, contractors and suppliers have been required for these massive projects. Everyone who has had a part in the process, from the patrons whose ticket surcharge helped pay the bills to the craftsmen who applied the finishing touches, can be proud of the contributions he or she has made to the theatre and to the millions who enjoy the wonders of The Fabulous Fox.

FOX

*At left, the lower ladies lounge
Above, a fan from the Egyptian Ballroom*



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Unforgettable Nights

More Than A Theatre

Step back in time ... into the throne room of the Egyptian pharaohs, lavishly designed and decorated with sweeping columns and ornaments of winged serpents and scarabs. Reliefs of Ramses II grace the walls and stage. Hieroglyphics at the entrance, on the ceiling and facing doors proclaim, "Welcome, You Who Is Bringer of Joy."



This intriguing scene is the centerpiece of the lavishly designed and decorated Egyptian Ballroom, which is available for private events

Candlelight sets the mood; the soft clink of crystal adds an occasional topnote to the low murmur of voices. Elegantly-attired attendants appear with trays overloaded with succulent morsels. This is the

fantasy world of a private event at The Fabulous Fox.

More than 40,000 special guests enjoy such opulent splendor each year through private parties, corporate banquets, trade shows, conventions, art exhibits and wedding receptions in The Fox's Egyptian Ballroom and Grand Salon.

Frequently, the entire facility is rented for corporate events and concerts featuring such performers as Rich Little, Bob Hope, The Pointer Sisters, Barbara Mandrell, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. Cocktails in the Grand Salon; dinner in the Egyptian Ballroom; followed by an invitation-only concert or stage spectacular. The possibilities are endless.

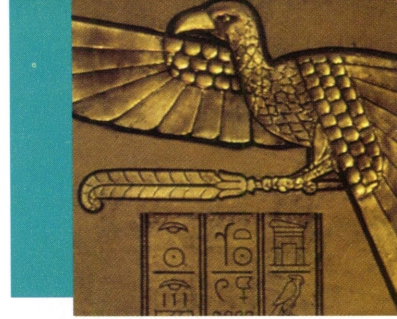
Known from the 1930's through the 1940's as Atlanta's largest and most popular public dance spot, the Egyptian Ballroom is now reserved for private events at The Fox. With 7,000 square feet of space, it has its own stage for live music or small productions. A hardwood dance floor holds up to 675 guests (464 for seated events). Intimate seating in the ornate overhanging balcony creates a fascinating, cabaret-like atmosphere.

Designed as the club room or lounge of the original Shriner's temple, the Grand Salon is next in size, accommodating up to 337 guests.

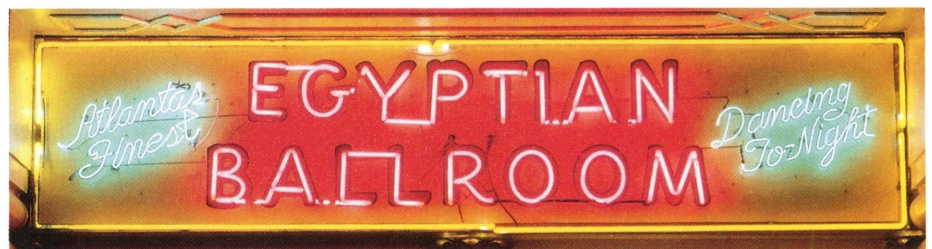


Original stained glass skylights, terrazzo floor inlaid with real mother-of-pearl, and stenciled Moorish beams and arches offer the mystique of a Middle-Eastern palace.

Extensive work over the last fifteen years has restored the rooms to their original opening day glamour. The elaborate stencilling patterns and chandeliers have been re-created, the walls repainted and glazed and new draperies installed. Even the massive bronze and stained glass "fan lamps" on the walls of the Egyptian Ballroom are back in place. The soaring columns lining the walls and flanking the stage have been repainted in the original colors. A new kitchen offers all the equipment needed for catering gourmet meals. Enlarged exits and stairways have increased the occupancy rate. A new elevator has been installed, making The Fox more easily accessible to the handicapped.



The Egyptian Ballroom is a great setting for corporate and private functions

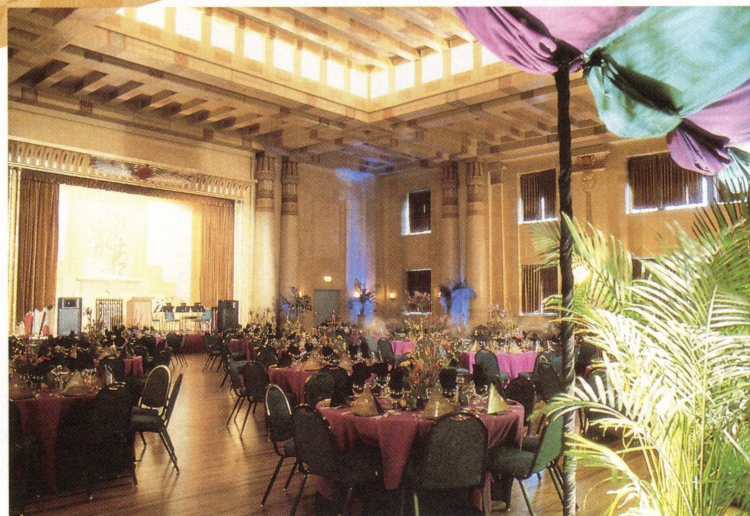




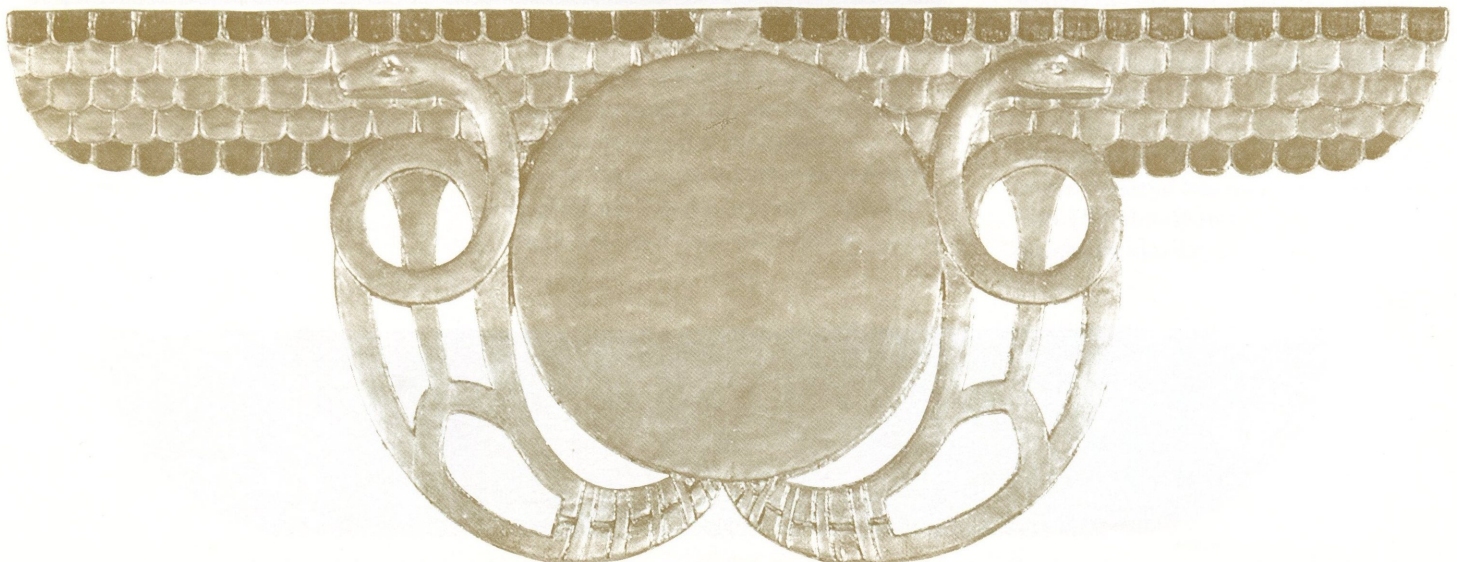
P. Thornton Mayre, principal architect of the firm which designed the Fox, reminisced in the 1930's:

"The lounges, with walls of masonry and elaborate ornamental details in gold and oriental coloring, rival the rooms where potentates entertained their royal guests." The Fox has lived up to his expectations. It has hosted receptions and special events for visiting ambassadors, noted U.S. senators and internationally-acclaimed stars — even Britain's future king, Prince Charles himself.

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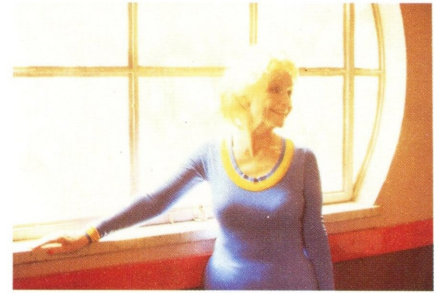
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Fox Reflections

The recollections of a former Fanchon and Marco chorus girl as told to Fox historians in the 70's.

Christmas Day, 1929 and the curtain rises on 24 of the luckiest girls in Atlanta — and the world. *Cuba Gaissart* remembers it well, as she was there on the Fox Theatre stage as an original Fanchon & Marco chorus girl. Their



have curves — more the Marilyn Monroe type. Today, it's 5'8" and the Brooke Shields type. That is how things have moved along," she mused. Once accepted in the cast, the hard work began. Each show ran two weeks and had four to six numbers. Between performances,



Cuba Gaissart is in the first row, first from the left

productions were elaborately decorated and finely choreographed, a splendid finale to the organ solo, movie and symphony that preceded.

For all the dazzle and excitement, it was a difficult job to get and keep. In 1929 word spread rapidly about the new stage show and its need for 24 beauties. Cuba learned of the opportunity from her dance teacher, while others read ads or listened to the grapevine. Finally, in a downtown auditorium the selection was made. "Back then you could not be over 5'5", and you had to

the girls practiced early and late to learn the upcoming production. "You had to keep it all in your head. It was confusing at times — in fact it was bedlam. But when the curtain went up everything went beautifully. That always fascinated me."

Backstage was just as interesting for them. The elevator to the dressing rooms was the first automatic push button elevator in Atlanta. "I would tell my friends about it, and they thought that unbelievable — no operator — just push a button!" When the girls reported to work they

enjoyed the attentions of numerous male admirers at the stage door. "I had one that never missed. He always had at least one flower for me - sometimes an armful." She never met him or even knew his name, as they were forbidden to say more than hello to these "Stage Door Johnnies." Anything more familiar would have meant her job.

The productions were called "*Ideas*" since each show had a different theme. Opening night hosted the *Sunkist Beauties* in a tropical setting. Other shows included pirates stealing away beautiful women and French-styled Apache dancers flinging the girls about the stage.

The inspiration on stage was only part of the total picture: Atlanta's newest and most glamorous building rapidly captured the city's heart. "The Fox was so beautiful — it created its own vibrant excitement just from its beauty. People would dress elegantly to come to the Fox and you could feel the excitement of the people entering the theatre," Cuba recalled.

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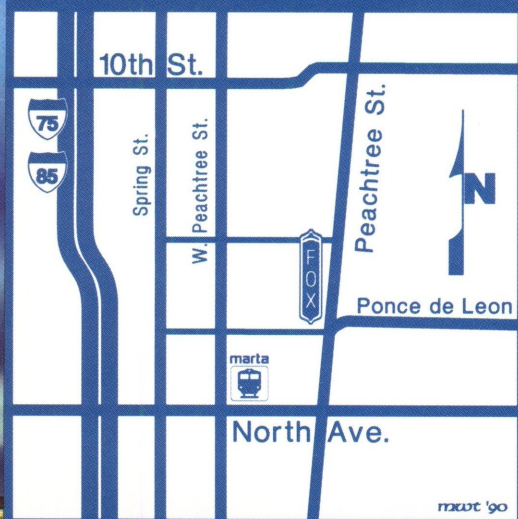


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Tour The Fox

The Fox "Top to Bottom Tours" are back by popular demand. History fans and theatre buffs who want an insiders' view of The Fox Theatre are treated to a three-hour tour guided by experts who know every secret tunnel and trap door. Visitors may tour the projection room for a breathtaking view of the entire auditorium; inspect the complex workings of the theatre's technical equipment and staging; wander the secret tunnels deep beneath the auditorium; even take a bow to an imaginary audience on the stage of one of America's premiere theatres. For more information please call (404) 881-2100.

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